(b) if so. the details thereof and the progress so far made in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) The world Bank has approved financial assistance of Rs. 302 crores for leprosy Eradication Programme and the Blindness Control Project which is proposed to be implemented in seven states at an estimated cost of Rs. 585 crores, is under its consideration. Financial assistance for the T.B. Control Programme is being discussed with the World Bank and the total outlay is still to be determined.

The activities under National Leprosy Programme invblve extension of Multi Drug Therapy (MDT) services to 66 endemic districts, 77 moderately endemic districts and (MDT) support to endemic pockets of low endemic districts in the states of Uttar Pradesh, madhya pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal, Orissa, Kerala, Manipur, Rajasthan, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Union Territory of Daman and Diu, Haryana, J & K Chandigarh including extension of IEC, monitoring & evaluation, Ulcer and disability care and training and manpower development for all States.

The Blindness Contrl Project will be implemented in the states of Andhra Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Rajasthan, The world Bank preparatory Mission has recommended for implementation of TB Control Project in five States and 10 Metropolitan cities.

Establishment of Top Class Hospital in rural and semi-urban areas

1667. SHRI MENTAY PADMA-NABHAM: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to finance and establish top class hospitals in district based quarters all over the country;

(b) if not, what plans Government have to meet the health needs *of* rural and semi-urban areas;

(c) whether Government are aware that private medical practitioners are charging heavy fees for all cardiac problems, including surgery; and

(d) whether Government have turned a blind eye to this requirement of rural and semi-urban areas?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b) There is no such proposal. Health is a State subject and the provision of health care services is the responsibility of the state Governments. The Central Government has however been supplementing the State's afforts through various Centrally Sponsored health programmes aimed at the prevention and control of major diseases.

(b) and (d) The Government does not regulate the fees charged by the Private Sector. However, the State are advised about the existence of disparities and the need for targeting the services in underserved areas, including the remote rural areas and slum pockets.

Demand of Debate on Population Policy

1668. SHRI V. NARAYANASAMY: Will the Minister of HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE be pleased to state:

(a) whether women's organisations have demanded a debate on population policy before finalisation of National Population Policy;

(b) if so, what is the reaction of Government thereto; and

(c) by when Government propose to do that?

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c) A Group of Experts under Chairmanship of Dr. M.S. Swaminathan has been constituted to draft the National